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ABSTRACT

In the present document, 18 empirical studies on the mobility of academic men are examined. Results of the study indicate that it is difficult to determine what faculty members will change their jobs for what reasons. It is felt that the economic aspects of a new job offering are not the only reasons for a faculty member's decision to change positions. Faculty are generally classified into 2 categories: the movers and the non-movers. Those who are movers, it is found, seem to feel that they will find more satisfactory working conditions at institutions other than the one where they are employed. What they actually find is a situation closely resembling the one that they left, and once again they move on. Faculty mobility appears to be decreasing heavily as the job market absorbs the overpopulation of Ph.D.'s, and the subject, within a very short period of time, is expected to become close to impossible to study. However, research is needed in the field of intrainstitutional mobility. Career paths within colleges and universities, mobility through the ranks and into and out of administration, are becoming increasingly important areas where study is needed. (HS)

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MOBILITY STUDIES ON ACADEMIC MEN: SOME
METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS AND SUBSTANTIVE FINDINGS

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ABSTRACT

Eighteen empirical studies on the mobility of academic men are examined with respect to their contribution to a labor market problem. Limitations are revealed with regard to institutional types and methodological approaches, especially in sampling practices.

Some substantive findings are presented. Inferences are drawn about faculty values and faculty work preferences. Restricted future faculty mobility suggests that research assume directions that are as yet unexplored.

MOBILITY STUDIES ON ACADEMIC MEN:
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INTRODUCTION

The literature contains a surprisingly large number of mobility studies on academic men, at least eighteen, in fact. However, failure of the researches to intersect reduces understanding of the process. For the most part, each inquiry was launched as if it were the first in the field.*

* There are reasons for the independence of some of the inquiries. See Table 1 below.

Consequently, there has been almost no building of a data bank. In addition, methodology had not been visibly improved. A theory of mobility has not emerged.

Despite these limitations, there is value in assessing the collection. What disappoints individually rewards when inspected in toto, for the first time. This paper examines the best conducted empirical researches on faculty mobility, establishes a set of categories for inspecting the findings, critiques the methodologies and conclusions, discusses the principal discoveries, and shows that these conclusions have contributed valuable insights into the nature of academic men.

While it is certainly true that the tightness of the marketplace and the oversupply of Ph.D.'s will reduce mobility appreciably

(Blackburn, 1971), a concern for faculty values assumes intensified importance as higher education tumbles through the 70's. The future of colleges and universities holds more than threats on tenure and academic freedom; at stake is the very health and well-being of our colleges and universities throughout this next decade. Their vitality will be contingent upon the establishment of a climate which fosters the continuous growth and development of academic men. Among the many consequences of the curtailment in expansion of the system of higher education is the simple fact that the average faculty age will increase appreciably for the first time since the depression years (Mazur, 1971). Unknown is how the supposed virtues of increased experience will balance against the purported decline in productivity. Thus it is essential that we learn as much about faculty as possible so as to construct environments which will nourish their talents, release their potentials, and increase their responsiveness to an ever changing social milieu.

The Studies

Table 1 synoptically displays the principal research. Each study is listed by the last name of the author.* Full bibliographic particulars are given in the references.

* The following studies, although they are not research on mobility per se, have relevance. They deal with recruitment to the profession and with retention. Listed alphabetically, they are: Balyeat (1968), Eckert and Stecklein (1961), Lazarsfeld and Thielens (1958), Lewis

(1967), Medalia (1963), Meeth (1965), Miller (1962), Parsons and Platt (1968), Roe (1953; 1956), Stecklein and Eckert (1958), and Stecklein and Lathrop (1960). The literature on manpower studies, done principally in the science area by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the National Science Foundation, are not included.

[Insert Table 1 about here.]

Five institutional categories, plus a sixth cell for studies which reported on four year institutions in more than one category, were generated in recognition of important distinctions learned from other research on faculty (e.g., from Lazarsfeld and Thielens 1958). One finding is that the behavior of academic men is related to their situs and their status, the kind of institution and its prestige rating. Also, they are principal categories enrolling a distinctive and significant proportion of faculty and students.

The second defining measure for constructing categories is the academic fields in which mobility was studied. Other research on academic men establishes that behavior differs significantly between faculty by field of study (e.g., Blackburn and Lindquist, 1971; Peters, 1971; Schuman and Lauman, 1967). (Sample size does not permit further subdivision.) One category is the liberal arts -- humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. A second is a single field, the discipline being noted in a separate parenthesis. The professional schools and vocational programs form a separate category. A final cell collects the studies involving faculty from both the

Table 1

Typology for Mobility Studies

Institutional Types

	Major Universities	State Colleges Emerging Universities	Liberal Arts Colleges (Selective)	Liberal Arts Colleges (Nonselective)	All Four Year Institutions	Junior/Community Colleges
Liberal Arts*	Caplow & McGee (1958) Hargens & Hagstrom (1967)		McGee (1967) ^b		Gustad (1960) ^b Marshall (1964) ^b	
Single Field	U.S. Dept of Labor (1953)				Anantaraman (1961)(Economists) Fincher (1969) (Physicists) Crane (1970)(Sociologists) Brown (1965)(Economists) Klugh (1964)(Psychologists)	
Professional School or Vocational Program					Aurand (1971)(Music)	
All (Liberal Arts, Professional, Vocational)	Cammack (1965) ^a DeJesus (1965) ^a			Brown (1967)	Farris (1968) ^b Cottingham (1964) ^b Kelly (1968) ^b	

*All, or at least one each from the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences

^aSingle Institution^bRegional (e.g., only Southeast, only midwest)

liberal arts and professional schools.

Before turning more specifically to the findings, the striking gaps in the table merit comment. First is the fact that those institutions which engage one-fourth of the faculty in the United States have not been studied at all. These are the state colleges and/or the emerging universities, the former Eastern, Western,... Central normal schools (as well as municipal and some private universities) that are now institutions of large size and increasing quality. Also absent is a significant group of private institutions. For example, the 300 or so private Catholic colleges and universities are not represented. Likewise, missing are the 800 liberal arts colleges that populate the countryside, independent colleges of lower selectivity but which nonetheless have a significant role in the total system of higher education. No study has been conducted on the mobility of these men. The handful of institutions that are highly selective have a distinctly different faculty (Klapper, 1969). In addition, our knowledge about community colleges, which now enroll about one-fourth of all of our students, is restricted to but four studies, a study of one city community college and three state community college systems. The one study attempting to link patterns in these colleges with those found in universities failed to corroborate the earlier research (Farris, 1968).

Also clear from Table 1 is the fact that the majority of the studies have been done on faculty in the sciences, both natural and social. Practically no research has been conducted on humanists.

Also, the large number of faculty in professional schools of law, medicine, education, business, dentistry, and the other professions remain unstudied.

One conclusion from these very obvious restrictions is that comparisons between studies of different disciplines and different types of institutions becomes all but impossible. A second is that out of necessity generalizations must be tentative.

The Findings

Practical ends determined data collection in the majority of the studies. There were a few instances of direct theory application, and these need to be cited. For example, Roe (1953) developed her investigations from the viewpoint of clinical psychology, sixty eminent scientists setting life goals for themselves and making decisions in accordance with their achievement of personal satisfactions and dissatisfactions. Caplow and McGee (1958) state their approach in part was to "demonstrate that academic institutions are amenable to sociological field study." Thus, in their sociological context they place special focus on a "vacancy-and-replacement process" and examine the interaction of men and their institutions as part of a general system. The studies by Crane (1970) also belong in a sociological framework, as does that by Parsons and Platt (1968). Like Roe, Parson's and Platt's main interest was not mobility per se. Brown (1967) recognized that studying academic mobility was interdisciplinary in nature for he saw it cutting across "three more-or-less distinct areas of literature--educational administration

social organization and social psychology, and labor economics (1967:7)." However, his academic training found him leaning most heavily on labor economics theory. Brown's limited success led him to conclude that "solely economic theories explain neither the current distribution nor the direction of mobility in academic labor markets (1967:263)."

Brown's remark leads to a second generalization. Besides the research not being conducted on the basis of accepted social scientific theory, the measured variables fail to account for a significant portion of the variance. Faculty mobility is not a predictive science. The ability to judge who will move and who will stay, at what time in his career, and the whole host of related questions are not significantly correlated with those factors which were introduced in the research.

Thirdly, what is involved in faculty mobility is an extremely complex process, one quite possibly beyond any practical capability of research. For example, looking at two of the major studies (that by Caplow and McGee and that by Brown), not only are they separated in time by about a ten-year interval, but also the way they have gone about their inquiry is so different that comparisons are all but impossible. Caplow and McGee interviewed people who knew the man who left, probing for the reasons of why he departed.

However, they have neither information nor an explanation from the professor who took another job. What comes through in their writing is the cynicism of those still in the shop and of the authors themselves.

In almost a converse fashion, Brown obtained data only from the man who had taken a new position. He has no corroboration from the people at the place of departure. The studies show that those remaining know little about why a man left. Was he not rehired, for example? Thus the two studies principally tell us that we do not know very much.

Fourthly, sampling errors introduce unknown consequences. One kind is easy to identify. Taking membership lists from formal organizations will exclude the less eminent and underrepresent the novitiates.

A second kind of error results from an unstated assumption of questionable validity, namely, that movers and non-movers are alike in all other respects except mobility tendencies. Several studies, including Caplow and McGee (1958) and Brown (1967) just cited, focus on those who just moved. Figure 1 depicts three potential population distributions on the basis of number of moves

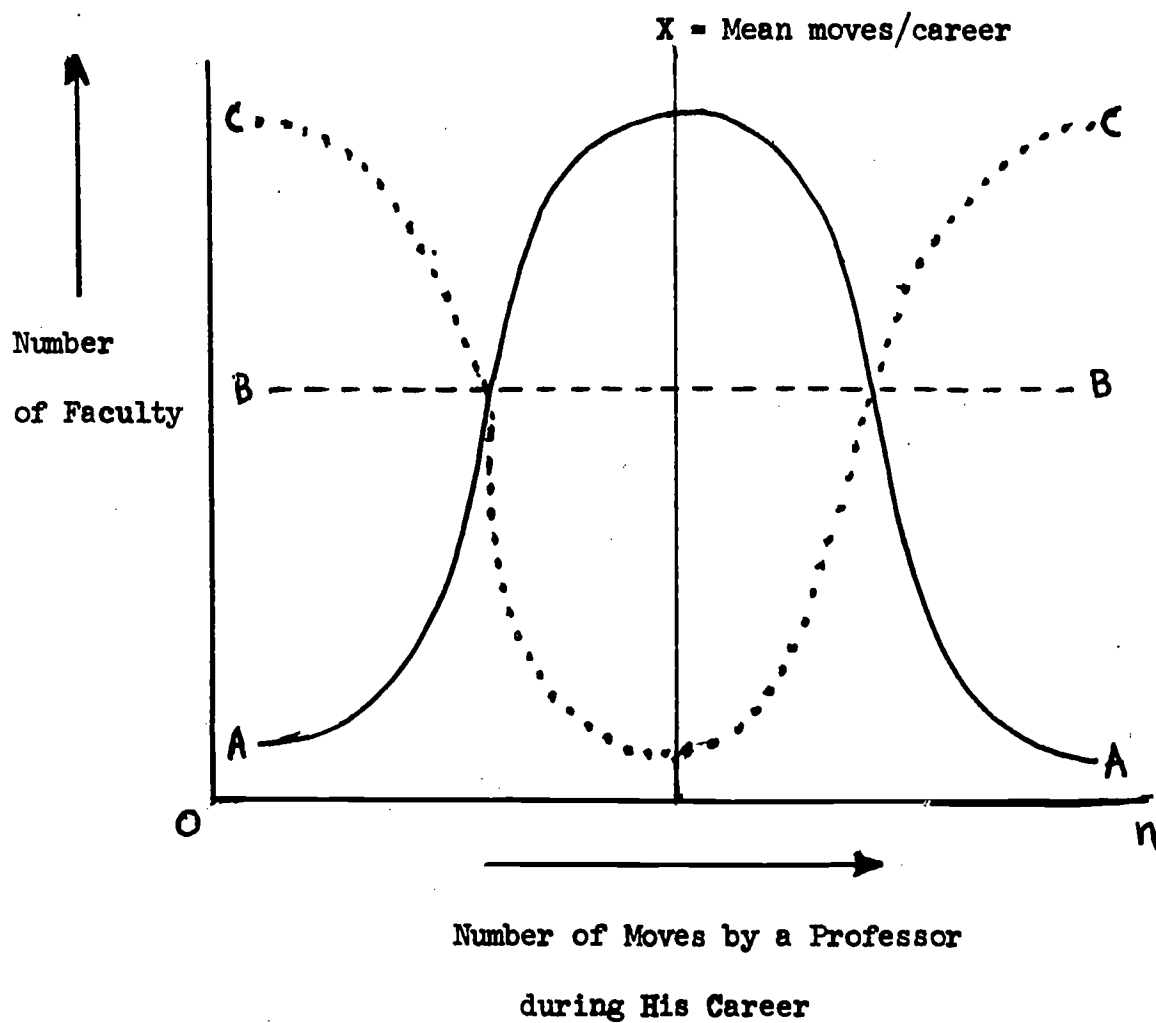
[Insert Figure 1 about here.]

made in the career of a professor. In ignorance, assuming a normal distribution (solid line, curve A) may be no more likely to be the actual state of affairs than to hypothesize an even distribution (dashed line, curve B) or a bimodal one of essentially two groups, movers and non-movers (dotted line, curve C).

But irrespective of the actual distribution, sampling those who just moved necessarily selects a disproportionate number of high frequency movers and underselects the low frequency job changer. (And, of course, never secures the non-mover.) Thus the sample studied

Figure 1

Three Distributions of the Universe of Movers



takes on the form of Figure 2. Once more, to assume movers are like non-movers in all other respects seems highly untenable,

[Insert Figure 2 about here.]

especially when mobility itself is the dependent variable.

Lazarsfeld's and Thielen's (1958; 439) data support this analysis. Their mobility rates are markedly less than Brown's. Their sample excluded those who had just joined the faculty of a college; that is, they excluded movers. This fact supports the hypothesis that there are movers and non-movers, more a dichotomy than a normal distribution.

Realistically, however, while there is much to be learned in the methodological area, it is not likely that a new theory will evolve in the near future even if a large scale, crash program of research is undertaken.

Investigators will probably continue to probe causes of mobility and higher education will benefit from these studies. But complete solutions to the problem appear remote.

Faculty Values

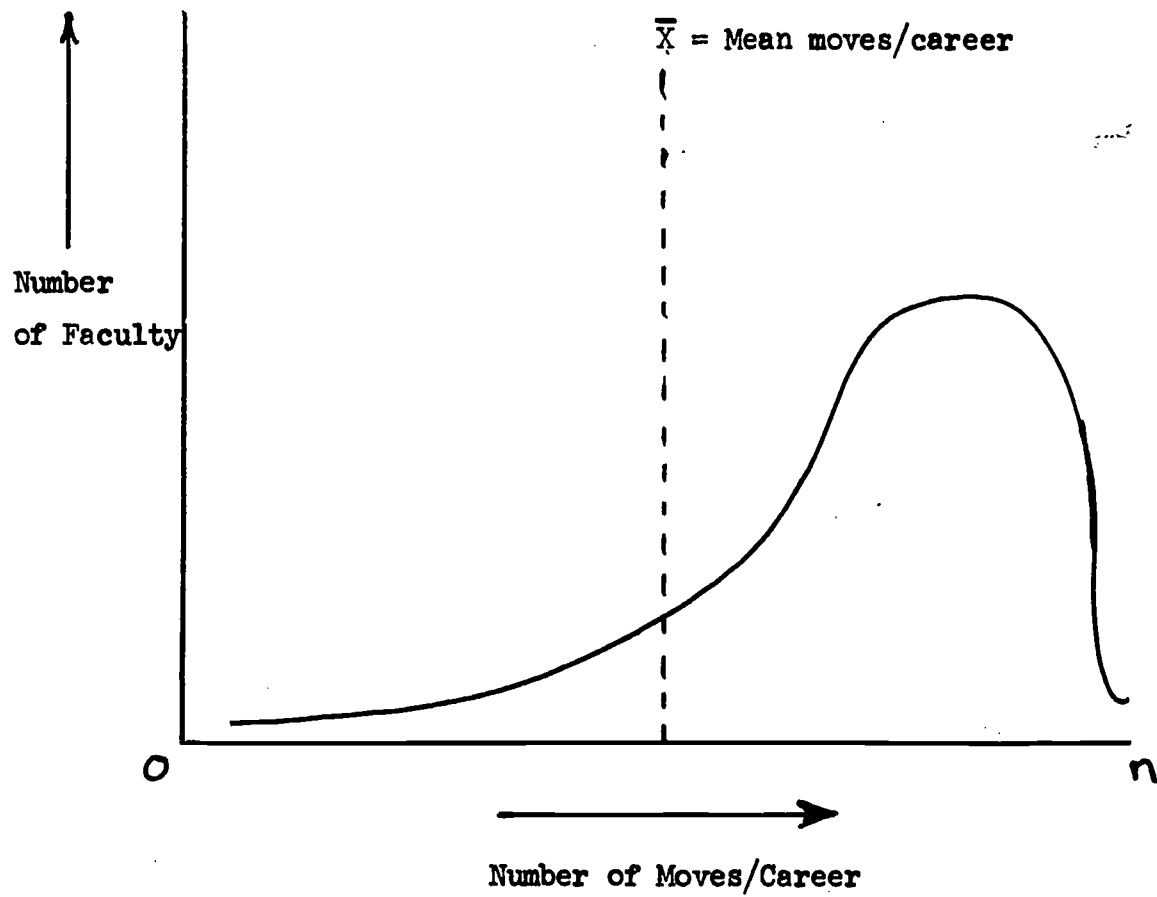
Some truths emerge, and most of these are not unexpected by experienced men. The fact that mobility decreases with age is not surprising. Nor is the fact that smaller departments have a higher turnover rate than larger ones. (Presumably small groups suffer more from interpersonal conflicts than do larger units which can isolate intolerable deviants.)

On the other hand, some truths run contrary to widely accepted

-8a-

Figure 2

Sample Distribution of Movers



belief. For example, mobility rate is not nearly as large as the popular talk implies. Brown (1967) finds about 6% of the faculty new to a college were at another college the year before. That is the national average, and his data is from the time of near peak market opportunity. In addition, private data from Berkeley, Harvard, and Michigan at these times shows loss rates of less than 1%. Thus Gouldner's model cosmopolitans are very local indeed, a point Grimes and Berger (1970) recently made in recasting faculty typologies.

Other faculty values surface from mobility studies that are of equal or even greater significance. Table 2 contains the rank order of importance of a number of job factors from four different studies. Brown's (1967) information was gathered from a study of newly hired faculty from every kind of four year college and university. Fincher's (1969) data deals with academic physicists and the conditions they

[Insert Table 2 about here.]

consider important in selecting a new position. Cammack's (1965) study is concerned with the faculty at one large state university while Gustad's (1960) deals ones with faculty in chemistry, English, and psychology.

As can be seen, the studies are not directly comparable for reasons of the sample composition, the time at which they were conducted, and because different factors were introduced in each. However, two generalizations are supportable from the findings. The first is that a faculty's principal concern is with their work environment -- the

Table 2

Institutional Reward Values for Professors

Rank	Gustad (1960)*	Cammack (1965)**	Brown (1967)**	Fincher (1969)
1	Opportunity for Creative work	Department Chairman Relationship	Research Facilities	Congeniality of Colleagues
2	Colleague Competency & Stimulation	Calibre of Associates	Colleague Competency	Academic Freedom
3	Working with Students	Academic Freedom	Teaching Load	Competency of Colleagues
4	Freedom from Restraints	The Library	Courses taught	Time for Research
5	Contribute to Knowledge	Teaching Load	Near graduate school	Size of Institution
6	Salary & Benefits	Reputation of Department	Reputation of School	Emphasis on Teaching
7	Congeniality of Colleagues	Salary	Congeniality of Colleagues	Salary
8	Recognition of Work	Income Potential	Quality of Students	Choice in Teaching Assignment
9	Opportunity for Advancement	Time for research	Academic Rank	Research funds or opportunities
10	The Community	Choice in Teaching Assignment	Salary	Climate or Geography

* From appendix D, Table XI, p. 82 on College Psychology Faculty. Correlations with English & Chemistry faculty are .90 & .83, respectively (Table 21: 27).

** As shown by Fincher (1969: 99)

courses they will teach, academic freedom, the competence and congeniality of their colleagues. The second is that the matter of money is important, but is clearly not the first priority item. It is also important to note that none of the researchers introduced the notion of job security or tenure. These were done before tenure became the crucial issue it is today. Maybe security has always been assumed and hence not really an issue. As Gross and Gramsch (1968) recently found, students and administrators and board of trustees -- as well as faculty -- hold academic freedom to be the number one concern for the operation of their institution. Since tenure exists principally for guaranteeing that outcome, it may well be that the high accord given academic freedom attests to a concern for tenure.

It is also important to point out the stability of the rankings in what college and university faculty value most. Over a ten year interval very little difference appears between what Gustad learned and others uncovered a decade later. Stability of values also may be corroborated by the findings of Aurand (1971:60). He found a highly significant rank order correlation (.78) between importance of job determinants for music faculty with respect to why they selected the present job they had and the criteria they would employ for any future position they would take.*

* It must be pointed out that Aurand (1971) found appreciably different outcomes from those in Table 2 in a professional school faculty.

There were enough overlapping factors of job determinants between his

study of musicians and Brown's categories to run a rank ^{order} ~~over~~ correlation. It was $-.29$. The principal differences contributing to the negative correlation was that academic musicians placed salary first and gave a lower ranking to competency of colleagues. At the same time, however, musicians were very much concerned with their work environment. They gave high ratings to the courses they would teach, facilities, teaching load, and the quality of students. Why there should be this inverse relationship is unexplained at this time. It does show that research on professional school faculty is very much needed.

DISCUSSION

A faculty futility emerges from the analysis of these studies, a "grass is greener on the other side of the fence." Apparently academic men -- or some, at least -- move to a new job to find the very same conditions that they thought they would find when they took their present position. Yet the chances that a new environment will be that much different from the one they were in is quite unlikely. This inference is also supported by Brown (1967). He found an important reason that a faculty member left his job was because of poor administration. He judges administrators to be almost perfect at his new place, when he accepts and first arrives. Remember, however, that he has been on the job only a few months when he responded to this inquiry. Balyeat (1968) uncovered the disillusionment phenomenon in a study at his university. He found that faculty were not attracted to other jobs; rather, they were driven from the ones that they had. The importance of an administrator

in this instance is that it is he who is also largely responsible for making a work environment either attractive or frustrating.*

* Cammack (1965) did find that faculty who left a university for other jobs had been promoted more rapidly and do have higher salaries at some later time in their career than do their counterparts who remained at home. This may have been the reason they left. It may also be the case that they were sought and moved ahead faster because they were able. That is, they might have advanced to the same degree even at home. However, this is not known from his study.

Said another way, a change of landscape may be very good for the individual and for the institution to which he goes. A new environment, even if composed of essentially identical ingredients, may be sufficient to recharge a man whose energies have been drained off along nonproductive circuits. If so, he gains. So does his new school.

With the tightness of the job market it may be a most serious matter that mobility will inevitably be reduced appreciably. Mobility may be needed desperately for the very reasons just mentioned. The percentage of new Ph.D.'s entering the academic world will be decreasing. The problem of keeping faculty regenerated is going to be an increasingly serious administrative task. Mobility is one way of vitalizing an institution. New ways of increasing interinstitutional faculty exchanges will pay handsome dividends.

NEEDED RESEARCH

While more variables might be introduced into mobility equations-- the age and year in school of children (the hypothesis being that a faculty family will not move when one child is entering his senior year of high school) to mention but one, the probability of improving predictive power is not great. Furthermore, as was said above, with mobility shrinking, the numbers available for studying will go down. Thus research will be more difficult to conduct.

On the other hand, there have been no investigations on intrainstitutional mobility. Career paths within colleges and universities becomes increasingly important. Mobility through the ranks and into and out of administration, relationships of productivity and teaching effectiveness to status and reward systems, the effect of leaves in and out of the system, a whole host of career pattern studies could be conducted to shed considerable light on the nature of academic men and the operation of the institutions in which they work. The continued strength of higher education is increasingly contingent upon research on itself.

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